



Bruce Rauner, Governor • James T. Dimas, Secretary

**For Immediate Release**

Wednesday, February 14, 2018

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## **One Case of Legionnaires' Disease at Chester Mental Health Center**

CHESTER – The Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) is reporting that one patient at Chester Mental Health Center has tested positive for Legionnaires' Disease. IDHS received the confirmation of the positive test on Tuesday, February 13<sup>th</sup>. The patient is being treated and is currently in stable condition.

Out of an abundance of caution, IDHS has informed staff, residents and community stakeholders.

IDHS is working with the Illinois Department of Public Health to determine the potential source of the bacteria. Environmental engineers will be on grounds this week to gather data and begin collecting water samples. IDHS will continue to be vigilant for respiratory illness. Staff are actively monitoring patients to quickly identify any residents with respiratory illness to make sure they receive immediate medical care.

Legionella bacteria occur naturally in the environment. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention reports there has been a rise in the number of cases of Legionnaires' disease over the past 15 years, with 6,000 cases reported nationwide in 2015. Approximately 300 cases are reported each year across Illinois. Legionnaires' disease cannot be transmitted person-to-person. Common water sources include decorative fountains, hot tubs, shower areas, and cooling towers.

The Chester Mental Health Center is the state's only maximum security forensic mental health facility. The facility is operated by the Illinois Department of Human Services and located in Chester, Illinois.